

# TERRA

## TERRA MUSEUM of AMERICAN ART

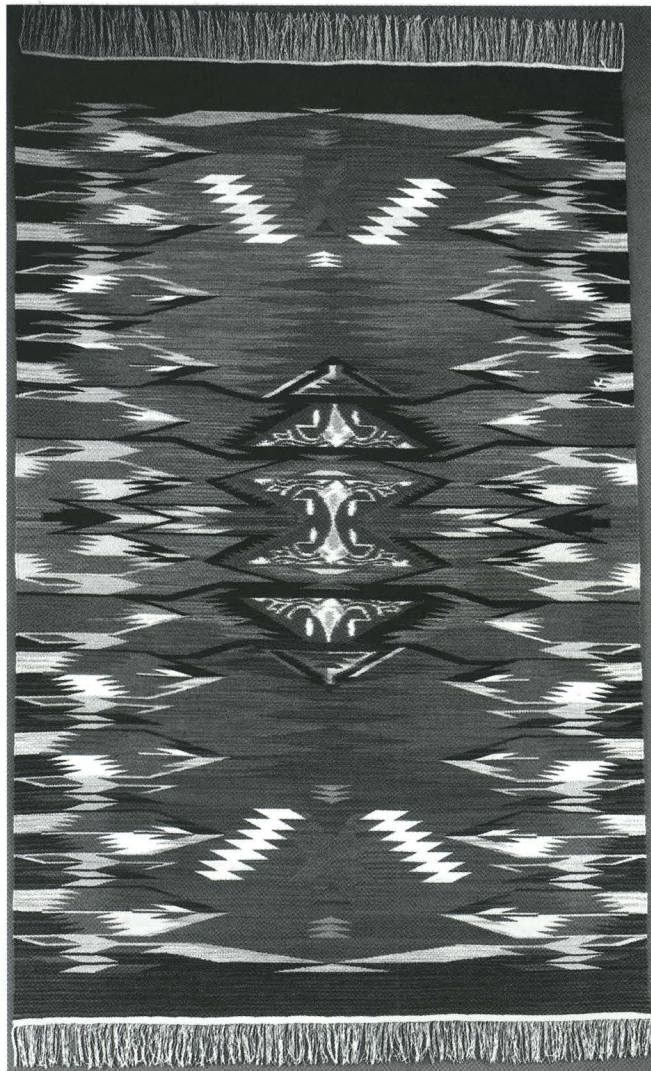
**A** *Arte Latino: Treasures from the Smithsonian American Art Museum* highlights over two hundred years of Latino art from across the United States. The range of paintings, sculptures, and photographs in *Arte Latino* represent the many cultural traditions of Latino artists who have settled in America. On view will be works of both United States-born and immigrant artists—among them Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans and Chicanos, Cuban-Americans and Latin Americans—many of whom explore personal identity through the expression of cultural heritage in their art.

“These artists present human stories that are at once culturally specific, but also universal,” said Elizabeth Broun, Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

For Terra Museum of American Art, this exhibition represents a unique opportunity to explore the diversity of Latino art and its role within American visual culture, from traditional devotional objects to contemporary paintings, photographs, and sculptural installations.

Terra Museum Interim Director Elizabeth Glassman notes, “*Arte Latino* reinforces the mission of the Terra Museum to deepen and broaden our understanding and appreciation of the nation’s rich artistic and cultural heritage. The vibrant array of artwork presents a closer look at the rich history of American art and the diverse Latino communities across the United States.”

*Arte Latino* is drawn from the significant collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM). Although not a comprehensive survey, this exhibition represents a sample of the rich traditions selected from almost five hundred Latino works now in



(Figure 1) Irvin L. Trujillo, *The Hook and the Spider*, 1995, naturally dyed wool, 92½ x 54 x ¼ inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Anderson III, ©1995, Irvin L. Trujillo.

### ARTE LATINO: Treasures from the Smithsonian American Art Museum September 8 through November 11, 2001

SAAM’s collection.

A grouping of devotional paintings and carvings from Puerto Rico represent the earliest works on view in the exhibition. Two seventeenth century works have the distinction of being the oldest in SAAM’s collection: Santa Barbara (Saint Barbara) from about 1680 to 1690, and Nuestra Señora de los Dolores (Our Lady of Sorrows) from about 1675 to 1725.

This fragile and rare group of early Puerto Rican artworks were donated by art scholar and author, Teodoro Vidal, to SAAM in 1997.

Puerto Rico, which became a territory of the United States in 1898, offered few opportunities for artistic training in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and many artists were self taught. The portrait and religious painter José Campeche,

for example, had little formal training, and was guided by his own talent and his exposure to the work of the exiled Spanish Court painter, Luis Paret y Alcázar. Campeche, who was of Afro-Caribbean ancestry and the son of a black slave, became an accomplished painter without ever leaving the island.

Another large group of artworks in *Arte Latino* features the long traditions of the Hispanic Southwest, ranging from a devotional crucifix of the eighteenth century to wood carvings and tapestry weavings of the twentieth century. The colorful and bold designs of weaver Irvin Trujillo incorporate past traditions with a modern sensibility. Trujillo, a seventh generation New Mexican weaver, has remarked about his work that he tries to capture the spirit of the old pieces while also expressing his own experiences in the contemporary world. Trujillo’s blending of ancient and modern influences emerges in his 1995 tapestry, *The Hook and Spider* (Figure 1). For this piece Trujillo has drawn upon such diverse design elements as Saltillo weaving, African rhythms, and the eight-point star of the Rio Grande Vallero.

As in the weavings of Trujillo, many contemporary works in this exhibition unite the artists’ experiences in both modern American and Latino cultures. The Chicano Movement inspired artists to address social and political issues. Emanuel Martínez’s *Farm Worker’s Alter* (1967) of painted mahogany is an expression of the artist’s political sympathies. Martínez’s use of the symbolic alter format commemorates the nonviolent farm labor movement led by Cesar Chavez in the 1960s.

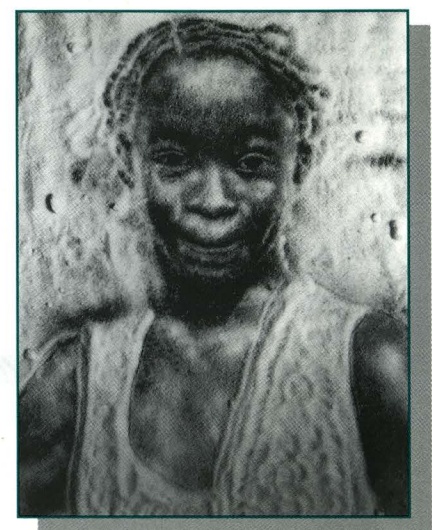
Many Cuban American artists have expressed a divided identity, reflecting their feelings about leaving family and their own past behind. Carlos Alfonzo, who immigrated to



**T**he exhibition *Treasures to Go* is a series of eight exhibitions in *Treasures to Go*, from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, touring the nation through 2002. The Principal Financial Group® is a proud partner in presenting these treasures to the American people.

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(Figure 2) Vik Muniz, *Valentine, the Fastest*, from the series *Sugar Children*, 1996, silver print, 14 x 11 inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum. Museum purchase made possible by the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation.

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the United States from Cuba in 1980, incorporates many stylized personal and religious symbols from Cuban Santería, a Caribbean religion that combines Roman Catholic and African spiritual traditions, to suggest life's difficult passages in his works.

Other artists also express the strong connection to the culture they left behind after moving to the United States. Vik Muniz, born in Brazil, speaks to the legacy of the sugar trade in both the subject matter and the material he uses in his 1996 series of photographs *Sugar Children* (Figure 2). Here, Muniz constructs poignant yet temporal portraits of the sons and daughters of sugarcane workers using refined sugar on a black background to create the portrait, and captures the sugar portrait with a photograph.

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